



The President's Daily Brief

26 July 1971

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Moscow's first authoritative commentary on President Nixon's planned visit to Peking has expressed some alarm that improved Sino-US relations might produce an anti-Soviet combination. (Page 1)

Numayri's forces appear to have consolidated their control in the Sudan, and bloody reprisals against the Communists may be in prospect. (Page 2)

The British have provided details of two alternative proposals Mintooff has offered for a new defense arrangement, and want NATO to make up most of the costs. (Page 3)

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USSR-CHINA-US

In Moscow's first authoritative comment on President Nixon's planned visit to Peking, a Pravda article yesterday expressed some of the Kremlin's fears concerning improved Chinese-US relations. The article was attributed to "I. Alexandrov"--a pseudonym employed to indicate high-level endorsement, but Moscow softened its impact by attributing many of the views to foreign sources.

The article sought to indicate that both Washington and Peking are trying to bring pressure on the USSR. It stressed, however, that the Kremlin still hopes to improve relations with Washington and Peking, implying that Moscow would not let the Sino-US dialogue interfere with its own current negotiations with either party.

Although Moscow said it was reserving judgment on future developments, a key passage added that it must take its worst suspicions into account in determining future policy. In particular, fear was expressed that the US-Chinese move might lead to a "political combination" directed against the USSR. Moscow did not suggest what counteractions it might take.

This temporizing on a future course suggests that the Soviet leadership is uncertain over just how far and fast Sino-US relations will develop. One official has said the Soviets will want to take a "long, cool look" at the visit's ramifications. Some are hoping that Taipei will remain a major obstacle to Sino-US ties. Ambassador Abrasimov in Berlin, for example, pressed US Ambassador Rush last week to acknowledge that there is an "obvious conflict" between the US defense commitment to Nationalist China and the preconditions for normalization of Sino-US relations set forth in Chou En-lai's recent public comments.

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SUDAN

Numayri's forces appear to have consolidated their control, although the country remains under a state of emergency and a dusk-to-dawn curfew. Minor gun battles were reported over the weekend as the government continued to round up the rebels.

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[REDACTED] The semiofficial Cairo daily al-Annam has cited Sudanese sources in stating that the secretary general of the Sudan Communist Party masterminded the coup against Numayri from the safety of the Bulgarian Embassy in Khartoum, where he had fled after escaping from Sudanese authorities last month. Al-Ahram claimed that the party planned to get rid of most of the actual leaders of the coup once it had gained control.

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Bloody reprisals against the Communists may well be in prospect. During the counter coup the junta machine-gunned some 30 soldiers, including a number of senior officers. One of the two coup leaders removed from the BOAC plane in Libya and seven others have since been executed. Numayri told a reporter Saturday night that 400 persons, including 100 army officers, were involved in the abortive coup, and that six military tribunals had been set up to try them.

On the international scene, Sudan has broken off diplomatic relations with Iraq, which had hastily recognized the rebel government, and Numayri has charged the ruling Iraqi Baath Party with participating in the plot. Numayri has also announced that Sudan will join the planned Federation of Arab States next January.

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MALTA

The British have informed the North Atlantic Council that Mintoff has offered them two alternative proposals for a new UK-Malta defense arrangement. One, a "wholly exclusive arrangement," would continue the present British veto power over third country use of Maltese facilities in exchange for an annual payment of \$72 million. The other, costing \$48 million, would be a "less exclusive arrangement" under which Valletta could grant non-Warsaw Pact countries use of its harbors and airfields. Mintoff told the British that other NATO countries could contribute to London's payment even though NATO must leave the island; he stipulated, however, that bilateral development aid from NATO members could not be counted as part of the payment.

The British have in mind a payment of \$24 million annually, of which they would pay less than half, and are pressing NATO to make up the rest. Up to now, UK aid has amounted to about \$12 million a year. London has asked its allies for a firm response by 5 August so that negotiations with Valletta can resume. NATO Secretary General Brosio, however, is dubious about the prospects for a special financial contribution.

Mintoff, in rejecting the UK's initial offer last week of \$12 million annually, told the British that their forces would have to be withdrawn if his demands were not met quickly, and that he would turn elsewhere for aid. One obvious direction would be toward Libya, whose deputy prime minister is reported to have told Foreign Secretary Home during a recent visit to London that Tripoli would be willing to help Malta with up to \$60 million annually if the UK would not do so.

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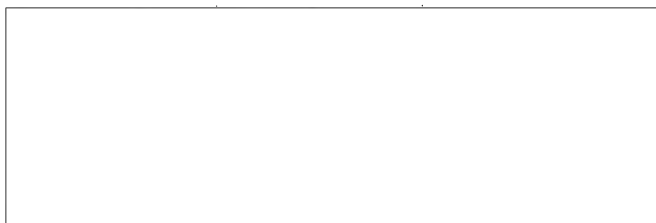
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NOTE

South Vietnam: Ky admitted to Deputy Ambassador Berger Friday that he still lacked about two thirds of the endorsements needed to qualify for the presidential election in October and said that Thieu's obstructionist tactics would probably prevent him from picking them up by the filing deadline of 4 August. Ky claimed that if he failed to make the list of candidates, "Big" Minh would also pull out of the race, leaving Thieu without credible opposition. Minh has been saying the same thing, although a politician Minh has considered as a running mate expects Minh to postpone a final decision until he can judge the fairness of the lower house elections next month.

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